

LURGAN URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT.

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT OFFICER
OF HEALTH,

SAMUEL AGNEW, M.A., M.D.,

FOR THE YEAR 1903

LURGAN :

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1904.



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LURGAN URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT.

R E P O R T

OF

The Medical Superintendent Officer of Health,

SAMUEL AGNEW, M.A., M.D.,

F O R T H E Y E A R 1 9 0 3 .

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
LURGAN.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

In submitting my Report for the Year 1903, I have the privilege of congratulating you on the condition of affairs that prevailed in this district during the year. Had it not been for an outbreak of measles of a very severe type in the month of May amongst children under school age, the mortality statistics of the year would have furnished a record. This disease, to which I shall refer specifically later on, is unfortunately not notifiable, and, before it had vanished, had resulted in 26 deaths. Notwithstanding this our zymotic death-rate was only 2·9; otherwise it would have been ·66. The year was an exceptionally wet one, the rainfall in this district being about four-and-a-half inches, or 15 per cent. above the average of the previous ten years. A wet year is not necessarily an unhealthy one; indeed, it seems to have quite the contrary effect. This is supposed to be due to its cleansing effect on the air, the soil, and the sewers.

VITAL STATISTICS.

During the year there were registered 380 births and 225 deaths, so that the net increase of the population was 155. These figures represent a birth-rate of 31·7 and a death-rate of 19·4. The average birth-rate for the past ten years was 32·7 and death-rate, 21·1. The zymotic death-rate was 2·9, the number of deaths resulting from infectious disease being 34, viz., 26 from measles, 2 from scarlet fever, 2 from diphtheria, and 4 from diarrhoea. No deaths occurred from small-pox, typhus, typhoid or enteric fever, or from whooping-cough. We have had no deaths from typhus since 1894, and none from typhoid or enteric since 1899, in which year there were two.

The following Tables give the more important details, and furnish comparisons with the principal towns in Ulster.

TABLE A.

Showing the Statistics for each Quarter of the Year 1903, as well as the Entire Year.

Lurgan Urban District.	1st Q'r't'r.	2nd Q'r't'r.	3rd Q'r't'r.	4th Q'r't'r.	Entire Yr. 1903.
Births	101	105	86	88	380
Birth-rate	32·0	36·2	29·8	29·1	31·7
Deaths	61	63	52	49	225
Death-rate	21·9	21·0	17·7	17·0	19·4
Zymotic Deaths	2	16	12	4	34
Zymotic Death-rate	0·7	5·8	3·7	1·4	2·9
Deaths of Infants under 1 ...	13	11	9	6	39
„ Persons 60 + ...	18	13	13	15	59
Urban Deaths in Workhouse	14	19	11	15	59
Inquests	0	1	0	1	2
Deaths from Scarlatina ...	0	0	0	2	2
„ Diphtheria ...	1	0	1	0	2
„ Typhus ...	0	0	0	0	0
„ Typhoid ...	0	0	0	0	0
„ Measles ...	0	16	10	0	26
„ Whooping Cough ...	0	0	0	0	0
„ Diarrhoea ...	1	0	1	2	4

TABLE B.

Showing the Death-rate in the Principal Towns of Ulster for each Quarter of the Year 1903, and for the Entire Year.

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	En. Yr. 1903.
Belfast	22·3	20·4	17·2	20·1	20·0
Londonderry	21·5	19·2	17·8	15·5	18·5
Newry	31·3	17·7	19·7	18·1	21·7
Lurgan	21·5	21·0	17·7	17·0	19·4
Lisburn	22·3	21·3	17·1	16·8	19·4
Ballymena	16·2	18·4	11·4	12·5	14·6
Portadown	16·3	14·3	18·2	21·4	17·5
Newtownards	22·8	24·6	14·9	26·3	22·2
Armagh	23·2	16·9	15·8	16·9	18·2

TABLE C.

Showing the Number of Births and Deaths; also the Deaths from Zymotic Diseases, with their respective Rates for each Year of the Decennium, 1894-1903, and the Natural Increase of the Population.

	Births.	Birth-rate.	Deaths.	Death-rate.	Deaths from Zymotic Diseases.	Zymotic Death-rate.	Natural In- crease of Population.
1894	368	32.2	232	20.3	21	1.8	156
1895	355	31.1	314	27.5	71	6.2	41
1896	394	34.5	210	18.4	21	1.8	184
1897	407	35.6	229	20.0	17	1.5	178
1898	358	31.1	236	20.6	32	2.2	122
1899	358	31.3	254	22.2	20	1.7	104
1900	404	35.5	280	24.5	16	1.4	124
1901	334	28.2	217	18.6	15	1.4	117
1902	359	30.3	234	19.5	15	1.3	125
1903	380	32.0	225	19.4	34	2.9	155
Total for 10 yrs	3717	321.8	2431	211.0	262	22.2	1306
Aver. for 10 yrs	371.7	32.18	243.1	21.1	26.2	2.22	130.6

TABLE D.

Showing the Monthly Death-rate in Lurgan for last Five Years.

	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
January ...	30.1	45.4	20.8	14.9	20.8
February ...	27.5	41.5	23.0	32.9	24.2
March ...	23.0	30.1	29.0	24.8	18.0
April ...	20.4	20.4	29.0	26.7	24.6
May ...	24.9	30.1	14.9	18.9	16.0
June ...	21.5	18.4	13.3	13.3	23.6
July ...	17.6	17.7	19.8	15.9	24.8
August ...	16.6	13.9	17.5	11.3	13.9
September	13.9	13.9	17.5	11.3	13.4
October ...	25.9	18.7	11.0	21.9	18.0
November ...	21.5	17.7	11.0	22.6	14.4
December ...	26.7	23.9	12.0	17.9	17.0

TABLE E.

Showing the Number of Deaths each Month during the Year 1903,
at the different Age-Periods.

		—1	1—5	5—15	15—60	60+
January ...	...	3	1	1	7	9
February ...	...	9	2	2	6	4
March ...	...	1	1	2	9	5
April ...	...	6	6	2	8	6
May ...	...	1	1	4	5	5
June ...	...	4	4	3	7	2
July ...	...	5	5	3	8	4
August ...	...	2	2	1	5	4
September ...	...	2	2	1	1	5
October ...	...	2	5	0	7	4
November ...	...	2	0	0	8	4
December ...	...	2	1	2	5	7
Total ...	...	39	30	21	76	59

TABLE F.

Showing the different Rates for 1901-2-3, and the Average Annual
Rates for the Two Preceding Decades in Lurgan.

	Average Annual. 1881—1890	Average Annual. 1891—1900	1901	1902	1903
Birth-rate ...	30·7	33·2	28·2	30·8	31·7
Death-rate ...	22·7	22·1	18·6	19·7	19·4
Zymotic Death-rate —	2·4	2·27	1·4	1·4	2·9
Deaths of Infants —1 ...	48·5	44·8	40	43	39
„ Persons 60 +	55·1	62·3	70	58	59

TABLE G.

Showing the Number of Deaths from Phthisis, Diseases of the Respiratory Organs, and from Zymotic Disease, in the Principal Towns of Ulster, during 1903.

	Phthisis.	Respiratory Diseases.	Zymotic Diseases.
Belfast	1,030	1,645	792
Londonderry ...	109	155	79
Newry	23	36	46
Lurgan	32	25	34
Lisburn	37	39	8
Ballymena ...	28	26	7
Portadown ...	23	30	31
Newtownards ...	41	35	16
Armagh	13	24	5

TABLE H.

Showing the Number of Deaths of Infants under One Year, and the Number of Deaths of Persons aged 60 and upwards, as well as the Number of Deaths from Phthisis during each of the last Ten Years in Lurgan.

	Under 1 Year.	60 and upwards.	Phthisis.
1894...	29	61	38
1895...	51	67	40
1896...	35	46	32
1897...	48	53	39
1898...	36	55	28
1899...	41	69	38
1900...	62	84	36
1901...	40	70	30
1902...	43	58	37
1903...	39	59	32

PHTHISIS.

I feel compelled again to draw special attention to the mortality from phthisis and other forms of tuberculosis, not only in this district, but throughout Ireland. The attention of Sanitary Authorities cannot be too strongly directed towards the ravages which tuber-

culosis is making in this island of ours, and to the effect which it is having on our death-rates. Of the 225 deaths registered, 32 were due to phthisis, and 16 to other forms of tuberculosis. The following Tables, which I have compiled from the last Annual Report of the Registrar-General, furnish instructive but melancholy reading. Out of 77,676 deaths from all causes, 11,837 resulted from tuberculosis, and 9,400 from phthisis or tuberculosis of the lungs. Out of every 10,000 persons living, 27 are doomed to die, practically in their prime, from this lingering disease, and yet Science has taught us that it is preventible. Surely the saving of so many valuable lives yearly would be worth the immediate attention of our Rulers. What vaccination has done to prevent small-pox; what sanitation has done to prevent typhus, typhoid, diarrhoea, and other filth diseases; what isolation and disinfection have done for scarlatina and diphtheria, can surely be done for phthisis—and yet all these combined do not claim one-fifth of the victims claimed by tuberculosis. Does anyone imagine that such results would have been achieved had not the Government taken the lead and introduced the Vaccination, Public Health Act, Infectious Diseases Prevention and Notification Act? And, similarly, the Government must introduce a Bill for the erection of County Sanatoria, under the control and management of the County Councils. The Local Government may urge Boards of Guardians to set apart special wards for consumptives, and may advise local Sanitary Authorities to issue sheets of instructions to the public, but the results gained are not worth the trouble and expense, and have no appreciable effect on the mortality rates. In the Report for 1902 issued by the Registrar-General, he gives a most instructive diagram, which shows at a glance that phthisis is the most fatal of all diseases, and that more persons die of it than of old age; and when we reflect that most of those who die of consumption would, if saved from that death, probably live to a ripe old age, we can readily imagine the wonderful change that would be effected in said diagram by such an alteration. Another diagram in the same Report shows that during the past thirty-nine years there has been a gradual but steady fall in the death-rate from tuberculosis in both England and Scotland, whilst during the same period in Ireland there has been a steady rise. In Scotland, in 1864, the tuberculous death-rate was 3·6 per 1,000, rose to 3·9 in 1870 and 1871, and from that time gradually fell to 2·3 in 1900. In England the death-rate from these diseases was 3·3 in 1864, 3·4 in 1866, and has gradually fallen to 1·9 in 1900. But in Ireland the death-rate, which was only 2·4 in 1864, has since gradually risen to 2·9 in 1900 being 2·7 in 1902. Whilst this was the death-rate from tuberculosis for the whole country, in the towns with a population of over 10,000, the rate was 4·29 in 1901 and 4·1 in 1902. An intelligent appreciation of these facts and of the details contained in the Tables will stigmatise the supineness of the Sanitary Authorities, the County Councils, and the Government, as a lasting disgrace to the country. It is, perhaps, vain to expect much improvement until a Minister of Health be appointed, and the County Councils be given the power to supervise the administration of the Public Health Acts by the District Councils, and to report defaulting Sanitary Authorities, as in England; but let us hope that such changes will take place at no distant date.

TABLE I.

Showing the Number of Deaths in Ireland from all causes, the Number from Phthisis, and the Number from all forms of Tuberculosis, since 1870.

	All Causes.	Phthisis.	All Forms of Tuberculosis
Average Number of Deaths, 1871—80	96,674	10,352	13,756
Average Number of Deaths, 1881—90	88,316	10,331	13,181
Average Number of Deaths, 1891—00	83,603	10,122	12,716
Number of Deaths, 1901 ...	79,119	9,539	12,335
„ „ 1902 ...	77,676	9,400	11,837

TABLE J.

Showing the Number of Deaths from all causes, from Phthisis, and from all forms of Tuberculosis, in the Larger Towns of Ireland as contrasted with the Rural Districts, in 1902.

	All Causes.	Phthisis.	All Forms of Tuberculosis	Rate for Tuberculosis per 100 persons living.
All Ireland ...	77,676	9,400	11,837	2·7
Registrars' Districts containing Towns with a Population of 1,000 and upwards ...	24,101	3,248	4,391	4·2
Other Parts ...	53,575	6,152	7,446	2·2

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

ZYMOTIC DISEASE.

The expenses incurred under the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889, for medical certificates was £7 3s. 6d. The amount paid in 1902 was £9 10s. 6d. 67 cases were notified, viz., 45 cases of scarlatina, 8 of diphtheria, 2 of typhoid fever, 4 of puerperal fever, and 8 of erysipelas. The very severe epidemic of scarlatina which prevailed during the latter half of the previous year gradually died away during the year, although a slight recrudescence was threatened in the autumn; but the prompt removal of the patients to Hospital, together with careful disinfection of the houses and their contents, enabled us to cope successfully with the spread of the disease. As usual, I have to thank my fellow-practitioners for their valuable assistance and early information, as

without these I would have been frequently heavily handicapped. Only 8 cases of diphtheria were notified as compared with 15 in 1902, viz., 3 in January, 2 in July, and 1 each in May, June, and September. Two deaths resulted from this disease.

TABLE K.

Showing the Number of Cases of each of the Diseases Notified during the past Five Years, and the Amount Paid for Notification in each Year.

	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903
Scarlatina	21	25	8	72	45
Diphtheria	5	7	7	15	8
Membranous Croup...	0	0	2	0	0
Typhus	0	0	0	0	0
Typhoid	14	16	11	6	2
Continued Fever ...	0	0	0	0	0
Small-pox	0	0	2	0	0
Puerperal Fever ...	1	0	0	0	4
Erysipelas	9	2	2	2	8
Total Number ...	50	50	30	98	67
Amount paid ...	£5 15 0	£5 6 0	£3 7 6	£9 10 6	£7 3 6

TABLE L.

Showing the Monthly Distribution of Zymotic Diseases Notified during 1903.

	Small-pox	Diphtheria	Scarlet Fever	Simple Continued Fever	Enteric Fever	Erysipelas	Puerperal Fever	Membranous Croup	Total
January	0	3	9	0	0	2	1	0	15
February	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	5
March	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
April	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
May	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
June	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
July	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
August	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
September	0	1	5	0	0	2	0	0	8
October	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	0	7
November	0	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	7
December	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	4
Total ...	0	8	45	0	2	8	4	0	67

TABLE M.

Showing the Number of Deaths Registered as having occurred from the principal Zymotic Diseases during the past Three Years, and the Two Decades, 1881 to 1890 and 1891 to 1900, in Lurgan.

	1881 to 1890	1891 to 1900	1901	1902	1903
Small-pox	2	1	0	0	0
Measles	55	68	0	2	26
Scarlet Fever	59	19	0	4	2
Typhus	22	3	0	0	0
Simple Continued Fever	1	0	0	1	0
Enteric Fever	10	13	0	0	0
Whooping Cough	36	64	1	1	0
Diphtheria	6	21	3	5	2
Diarrhoea	70	79	11	2	4

TABLE N.

Showing the Number of Deaths from the principal Zymotic Diseases in the Leading Towns of Ulster during 1903.

	Small-pox	Measles	Scarlet Fever	Typhus	Whooping Cough	Diphtheria	Simple Con- tinued Fever	Enteric Fever	Diarrhoea & Dysentery	Total	Annual Rate per 1,000
Belfast ...	0	125	24	4	168	40	18	136	279	792	2.2
Londonderry ...	0	4	0	4	35	5	0	2	29	79	1.9
Newry ...	0	39	0	0	2	1	0	0	4	46	3.7
Lurgan ...	0	26	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	34	2.9
Lisburn ...	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	2	8	0.7
Ballymena ...	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	7	0.6
Portadown ...	0	18	0	0	6	4	0	0	3	31	3.1
Newtownards ...	0	0	1	0	11	1	0	0	3	16	1.8
Armagh ...	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	0.7

NON-NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

MEASLES.

During the year 26 deaths were registered from measles. The disease showed itself in the month of January, when two children came up from Belfast, where another child of the same family had died of the disease a few days previously. A number of cases occurred in the locality to which they had been brought during the next few months, but the disease showed no definite signs of spreading until May. Before this, however, a large number of cases had occurred in the country round about, which had, I believe, a distinct origin, and which may have been the chief source of the Lurgan epidemic. However, in the month of June the disease took a severe hold on the younger children in the neighbourhood of Edward and Arthur Streets, and in that month alone 12 deaths occurred; 7 more occurred in July, and after that the disease died out. It was almost entirely confined to children under school age, so that we were enabled to take sufficient precautions to prevent it spreading to the rest of the town, or interfering much with the attendance at the schools. During the past ten years measles has carried off more victims than small-pox, typhus, typhoid, scarlatina, and diphtheria combined. It is, therefore, a matter of grave import whether measles should not be included amongst the list of notifiable diseases. If it were I have no doubt that a great many children's lives would be saved, and the same remark also applies to whooping cough, which, however, fortunately did not show itself amongst us during the year.

D I A R R H O E A .

The number of deaths from this disease was only 4. With the exception, perhaps, of typhoid fever, no disease gives such valuable indications of the sanitary condition of an urban district as zymotic diarrhœa. Especially amongst children and infants I have noticed that the improvements in the domestic sanitary arrangements have been followed by a diminution in the number of cases of diarrhœa, and consequently fewer deaths. This is most distinctly satisfactory, as a very large proportion of the infants in this district are bottle-fed, and if the atmosphere of the house is at all polluted it is almost impossible to keep the milk in condition fit for use.

The following two tables (O and P), for the particulars of which I am indebted to Samuel A. Bell, Esq., J.P., show the rainfall during the several months of the year 1903, as recorded at Belle Vue; and the total rainfall during each year of the decennium 1893-1902.

TABLE O.

Rainfall During 1903 at Belle Vue, Lurgan.

	Total Depth in inches	No. of Days on which more than ·01 in. fell	Greatest fall in 24 hours		
			Depth	Date	
January ...	4·29	19	·84	19	The total rainfall is 4·46 inches over the average of the previous ten years, which was 29·03. Over 3 inches fell in January, March, July, August, September, and October. 1·22 inch fell on the 21st of July, and 1·14 on 17th of September. Rain fell on 235 days compared with 194 days in 1902 and 175 days in 1901.
February ...	1·74	17	·44	17	
March ...	3·52	28	·82	28	
April ...	·70	12	·23	12	
May ...	2·18	17	·36	17	
June ...	1·31	13	·72	13	
July ...	3·95	21	1·22	21	
August ...	4·23	30	·60	30	
September ...	3·49	17	1·14	17	
October ...	4·30	27	·41	27	
November ...	1·72	16	·46	16	
December ...	2·06	18	·36	18	
Total ...	33·49	—	—	235	

TABLE P.

Showing the Total Rainfall During the Years 1893-1902 at Belle Vue, Lurgan.

	Rainfall
1893	23·41
1894	29·00
1895	29·28
1896	29·02
1897	30·07
1898	27·83
1899	29·56
1900	33·72
1901	28·67
1902	29·75
Total ...	290·31

Average for 10 years, 29·03.

WATER SUPPLY.

Ninety-five additional houses have been supplied with the town water. This water is now being thoroughly appreciated by the inhabitants, and no complaints have been received regarding it. The quantity consumed daily was 266,933 gallons, being an increase of 14,900 gallons from the previous year. The daily average per head was 22·24 gallons ; in 1902, 21·02 gallons.

TABLE Q.
Water Consumption During 1903.
Water Pumped Up.

			Water Pumped Up.
First Quarter	...	...	24,160,780 gallons
Second Quarter	...	...	23,907,180 „
Third Quarter	...	...	25,541,720 „
Fourth Quarter	...	...	23,554,020 „
Total			97,163,700 gallons
Average Weekly Quantity	...		1,868,533 „
Average Daily Quantity	...		266,933 „
Average Daily per head	...		22·24 „

COMMON LODGING-HOUSES.

There are only 6 common lodging-houses in the town ; these are regularly inspected by the sanitary sub-officer. They are kept fairly well, and no case of infectious disease has been notified in connection with them.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

Only 2 licensed slaughter-houses exist within the town boundary. These have been regularly inspected, and no infringements of the bye-laws have been detected in connection with them ; they are not model ones, or such as should be tolerated in a town with any pretensions to municipal government, but until the Council see their way to put up a public slaughter-house, which is much needed, we cannot be too critical. A great deal of the butcher's meat sold in Lurgan is killed and dressed in three outlying buildings, which have been erected within the radius of a mile in different directions.

DAIRIES, MILKSHOPS, AND COWSHEDS.

These have been kept under close supervision both by the sanitary sub-officer and myself. A special visitation was made in the month of September, and full directions given for the improvement of such as were considered defective. The owners in almost every case seemed perfectly willing to fall in with our suggestions. Two ice-cream vendors ply their trade within the town, but as they are not registered I have very little control over them. It is very important that they should be made to register, as

disease and sickness have frequently been traced to the milk used in the manufacture and disposed of by them in the course of trade.

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS.

The following articles have been forwarded to the County Analyst for analysis by Sergeant Gallagher, who is the local inspector under the above Acts :

County Armagh.

1903	1st Qr.	2nd Qr.	3rd Qr.	4th Qr.	Total.
New Milk ...	3	3	3	3	12
Buttermilk ...	1	1		2	4
Whiskey ...	3	2	3	1	9
Butter ...	2	1	1		4
Cheese ...	1	1		1	3
Rum ...		1	1	1	3

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

As the Council has not deemed it advisable to take any steps to put into execution their powers under the Factory Act, 1901, very little has been done in connection therewith. No Register of workshops is kept, and no regular lists of out-workers furnished, except in one or two instances. Considering the quantity of home work that is done in this district, I do not know any locality where the provisions of the Act should be so strictly enforced. It should be a matter of urgent necessity on the part of the Council to see that such work is performed under conditions that are not inimical to the health of the operators. In my last report I gave a concise summary of the more important duties imposed on district councils and their officers by this Act.

SCHOOLS.

All the public schools have been regularly inspected during the year. I am glad to be informed that definite arrangements have been made to proceed with the erection of a new school instead of the present unsuitable building used in connection with the Queen Street Methodist Church. No outbreak occurred in any school during the past twelve months.

THE DUTIES OF SANITARY SUB-OFFICER.

The duties of the sanitary sub-officer have been carefully and efficiently discharged during the year. Fifty-four houses were disinfected, the bedding, clothing, etc., being removed to the Workhouse Disinfecting Chamber.

I remain, Mr Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

SAMUEL AGNEW, M.S.O.H.

